

The First 50 Women in Idaho Law

JUDITH HOLCOMBE

September 27, 1968



Judith Holcombe was born in Kansas in 1942 to Joseph and Jean Holcombe. She has one sister and two brothers. Her father was in the Navy and stationed in the Pacific during World War II. Thereafter, the family moved every 2-3 years, eventually settling in southern California. Holcombe graduated in 1960 from James Monroe High School in Sepulveda, California.

After high school, Holcombe attended the University of California at Los Angeles, transferred to U. C. Berkeley for a while, and later return to UCLA where she graduated with a degree in political science in 1965. During her undergraduate studies, Holcombe took a course on Constitutional Law and became idealistic about the law. She applied to and was accepted at UCLA's School of Law and began there in 1965. After two years, however, Holcombe decided to transfer to the University of Idaho College of Law to join her first husband, who had received an assistant professorship at the University. Thus, Holcombe completed her third year of law school in Moscow and graduated in 1968. On September 27, 1968, Holcombe was admitted to practice law in Idaho.

Holcombe's first job after graduating law school was as a staff attorney for Lewis-Clark Legal Services in Lewiston. She later became its director and was referred to as "Lewiston's leading lady lawyer" – an "easy distinction," she says, "since there was only one [woman lawyer] practicing [in Lewiston]." During her work she was exposed to the newly created Idaho Human Rights Commission and was recruited to apply for a position with that entity. In 1972, Holcombe joined the Idaho Attorney General's office (Tony Park was the Attorney General). She was assigned to work as the first director of the Idaho Human Rights Commission and as a statewide ombudsman for the Department of Aging.

In 1974, Holcombe became an Assistant General Counsel of Boise Cascade Corporation, the first woman to serve in that position. John Clute, General Counsel at the time (and later dean of the law school at Gonzaga), hired Holcombe to handle employment, transportation, aviation, real estate and general corporate work. In 1985, Holcombe decided to leave corporate practice and joined the firm now known as Givens Pursley – becoming its first woman partner. She stayed at Givens Pursley until 1996, when she decided to become a solo practitioner. In 2003, she declared herself to be a "recovered attorney not yet ready for the retirement world." She maintains an active license, although she no longer engages in general practice.

Holcombe currently lives in Boise with her husband, fellow Idaho attorney Richard Weston, where, she reports, "I am now launched in the avocation which I hope will occupy the next thirty or so years of my life – as an artist." In fact, her work has appeared on the cover of the Idaho State Bar's monthly magazine, *The Advocate* (September 2004) and she often shows her pieces (mainly watercolor and oils) throughout Boise.